

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
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R 011708Z DEC 77
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2468
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMEMBASSY HONG KONG
USLO PEKING

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 PARIS 35065

EO 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: VN, FR
SUBJECT: FRENCH VIEWS OF VIETNAM

SUMMARY. IN A ROUTINE TOUR D'HORIZON, QUAI DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR ASIA, DOPFFER SAID THAT FRENCH HAVE NOT YET LEARNED VERY MUCH ABOUT THE LE DUAN TRIP TO PEKING, BUT THOUGHT THAT NOT MUCH HAD BEEN ACCOMPLISHED AND THE WELCOME WAS NOT TOO WARM. THE FRENCH THINK THAT THE KHMER ATTACKS HAVE SUPRISED THE VIETNAMESE AND ARE GREATLY INFLUENCING OTHER POLICY DECISIONS. THE SOVIET AND CHINESE VISITS AND THE US/VN TALKS ARE PERHAPS ALSO DESIGNED TO PREPARED FOR FOREIGN POLICY DISCUSSIONS AT A YEAR-END, HIGH LEVEL PARTY MEETING. THE FRENCH HAD NOT RECENTLY HEARD ANYTHING VERY SUBSTANTIAL FROM THE VIETNAMESE ABOUT US/VN RELATIONS, BUT DOPFFER WAS INCLINED TO THINK THAT THE BASIC POLICY HAD NOT CHANGED: INSISTENCE ON "HEALING THE WOUNDS OF WAR" WOULD CONTINUE.

1. LEDAN VISIT TO PEKING. DOPFFER SAID THAT A CABLE FROM THE FRENCH EMBASSY IN PEKING HAD ADDED LITTLE
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TO THE GERNERAL IMPRESSIONS ABOUT THE LE DUAN VISIT TO PEKING WHICH HE HAD DERIVED FROM THE PRESS COVERAGE. (PEKING EMBASSY REPORTED BASICALLY THAT THE VISIT DID NOT ACCOMPLISH VERY MUCH AND THE WELCOME WAS NOT VERY WARM.) THE FRENCH THOUGHT THAT THE VISIT AT THIS TIME WAS PROMPTED BY SEVERAL CONSIDERATIONS: LE DUAN HAD BEEN IN MOSCOW AND HE WISHED TO SHOW HE WAS WELCOME IN

PEKING ALSO : THE VIETNAMESE ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE DISPUTES ALONG THE CONTINENTAL BORDER (AS WELL AS THE PARACEL/ SPRATLEY QUARREL) THE VIETNAMESE PROBABLY WISHED TO CONVINCE THE CHINESE TO INTERVENE WITH THE KHMER TO STOP THE ATTACKS IN THE DK/VN BORDER AREA-- PERHAPS THE VIETNAMESE MIGHT EVEN HAVE ASKED THE CHINESE TO DECREASE THEIR SUPPLY OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT WHICH FEEDS THE COMBAT THE VIETNAMESE ARE PROBABLY PREPARING A YEAR- END HIGH LEVEL PARTY MEETING TO ASSESS THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE PARST YEAR AND TO ADOPT GUIDELINES FOR NEXT YEAR AND A SOUNDING OF CHINA AS WELL AS THE USSSR WOULD BE IN ORDER. DOPFER THOUGHT THAT THE OSTENSIBLE REASONS FOR THE VISIT WERE PROBABLY A TOUR D'HORIZON OF THEIR RESPECTIVE POLICIES AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND AID -- GIVEN THE BAD VIETNAMESE HARVEST, VIETNAM MIGHT HOPE TO GET MORE FOOD AID THAN CHINA PROVIDED LAST YEAR WHEN CHINA HAD ITS OWN AGRICULTURAL PROBLEMS.

2. THE FRENCH HAD NOTED THAT THE SOVIETS, AT LEAST THE SOVIET EMBASSY IN HANOI, WERE NOT AWARE OF THE LEDUAN TRIP TO PEKING. WHEN THE PRESS CARRIED THE STORY, THE SOVIET EMBASSY IN HANOI SENT A FIRST SECRETARY TO THE OFFICE OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE TO CONFIRM THE NEWS. THE SOVIETS INDICATED TO THE FRENCH SOME ANNOYANCE THAT LE DUAN WOULD MAKE SUCH A LONG AND PUBLICIZED VISIT TO CONFIDENTIAL

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PEKING. DOPFFER SAID THAT THE FRENCH HAD CONCLUDED THAT THE SOVIETS WERE SUPRISED BY THE TRIP AND THEREFORE THAT LE DUAN HAD NOT DISCUSSED IT IN ADVANCE WHEN HE WAS IN MOSCOW. DOPFFER NOTED THAT IT WOULD OF COURSE BE IN THE SOVIETS'INTEREST TO INDICATE THEY HAD NOT BEEN CONSULTED.

3. KAMPUCHEAN PROBLEM. THE FRENCH THOUGHT THAT THE MILITARY PROBLEMS WITH KAMPUCHEA, WHICH WENT FAR BEYOND BORDER SKIRMISHES, WERE A VERY IMPORTANT ELEMBT IN CURRENT VIETNAMESE FOREIGN POLICY DECISSIONS. WHILE THE VIETNAMESE HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN VERY HARSH IN THEIR CONDEMNATION OF THE THAI GOVERNMENT (NGUYEN CO THACH TALKS IN PARIS ON OCTOBER). THEIR POSITION HAD NOW SOFTENED, AND AMBASSADORS SHOULD BE EXHCANGED SOON. DOPFFER THOUGHT THAT THE TROUBLES WITH KAMPUCHEA WERE A FACTOR IN THE NEW APPROACH TO THE THAI. AS NOTED ABOVE, KAMPUCHEA WAS ONE TOPIC FOR DISCUSSIONS IN PEKING. DOPFER ALSO THOUGHT IT WAS A FACTOR IN THE TALKS WITH THE US. DOPFFER ALSO THOUGHT THAT THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CLASHES WAS SHOWN BY THE FACT THAT CAMBODIAN DIPLOMATS IN HANOI HAD SPOKEN TO OTHER DIPOMATS ABOUT THE FIGHT-

ING AND BLAMED IT ON HANOI -- JUST AS THE VIETNAMESE
HAVE ACCUSED THEKHMER OF ATTACKING.

4. VIETNAMESE ATTITUDE TOWARD US. WHILE THE NEW
APPROACH TO THAILAND AND SOME OTHER ACTIONS SHOWED A
SOFTENED LINE, THE FRENCH HAD NOTED THE MILITANT TONE OF
OTHER RECENT VIETNAMESE ACTIONS, SUCH AS THE STATEMENT
CONCERNING GUAM, THE ATTACKS ON SOMALIA AND SADAT, THE
SUPPORT FOR THE POLISARIO AND THE PROBLEMS WITH SINGAPORE.
THE FRENC WERE THERE FORE UNDECIDED ABOUT

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 PARIS 35065

THE POSSIBILITY OF A A MORE FLEXIBLE VIETNAMESE POSITION
TOWARD THE US. HEY HAVE SEEN NO INDICATIONS THAT THE
VIETNAMESE HAVE CHANGED THEIR "PRINCIPLED" POSITION ON
ARTICLE 21, AND DOPFFER THOUGHT SOME US CONCESSION ON
AID WOULD BE NECESSARY BEFORE "NORMALIZATION" OF
RELATIONS. PERHAPS SOME IMPROVEMENT IN CONTACTS MIGHT
BE POSSIBLE IF THEY WERE NOT PRESENTED AS NORMALIZATION.
THE VIETNAMESE HAVE NOT RECENTLY SAID ANYTHING VERY
ENLIGHTENING TO THE FRENCH, AND THE FRENCH HAVE, OF
COURSE, NOT ASKED. DOPFFER THOUGHT THAT TALKS WITH THE
US WOULD IN ANY CASE BE IN ORDER BEFORE A YEAR-END
PARTY MEETING.

5. KUWAIT AID TO VIETNAM. THE FRENCH HAD LEARNED THAT
THE KUWAIT GOVERNMENT IS PROVIDING GRANT AID OF USD
500,000 TO FINANCE AN AGRICULTURAL STUDY OF
VIETNAM. THE FRENCH WONDERED WHETHER THIS WAS A SUG
IDEA AND REPRESENTED A DISCREET WAY FOR THE US TO

PROVIDE AID TO THE SRV.

6. SRV RESPONSE TO FRENCH OFFER TO HELP IN BRILLIG
CASE.DOPFFER SAID THAT WHEN THE FRENCH AMBASSADOR TO
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HANOI RAISED WITH THE VU HOANG THE POSSIBILITY OF A
FRENCH CONSULAR OFFICER'S SEEING THE BRILLIG CREW, THE
LATTER RATHER NASTILY BERATED THE FRENCH AND ADVISED
THEM NOT TO GET MESSED UP IN A DIRTY AFFAIRS ON NARCOTIC
TRAFFICKING.
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